Catch the big one this fall

Anglers in Central Virginia are gearing up for some of the best fishing of the year in this and coming months.

Autumn fishing -- from September through November and often into December, depending on the weather -- ranks right along with springtime angling in terms of productivity in the Old Dominion.

Game fish in the rivers, lakes and ponds of Virginia begin to forage with renewed vigor as the waters cool, storing up energy for the coming near-dormant periods during the deep of winter.

Last week's unseasonably cool weather reportedly triggered a feeding spree among outsized smallmouth bass in the James River. Jack Evans, Jim Pugh, Dick Guild and Bill Burger, using minnows and artificials on a canoe float trip down the James, took several smallmouth bass in the three-to-four-pound range, along with several smaller bass and a stringer-full of large bream.

Floating is a popular method of fishing rivers such as the James when temperatures make wading uncomfortable. Evans, Pugh, Guild and Burger took their fish in the slow moving, deep pools behind riffles in the river.

Anglers should not overlook the smaller creeks and rivers which flow into the larger rivers. Often these creeks harbor fish of awesome proportions eager to slam an artificial lure or gobble up a live bait. The smaller creeks are often accessible only by wading, which largely limits anglers to fishing them early in the fall, before water temperatures get too cold for wading.

Fish in impounded waters become active when the temperature drops, as well.

Lakes such as Buggs Island, Smith Mountain, Gaston and Leesville contain a wide variety of game fish, ranging from striped bass to channel catfish.

As water temperatures begin to gradually fall with summer's exit, the fish begin to move into shallow water, seeking forage around stumps, brushpiles and other underwater structure. This makes it easier for the angler to find the fish, which have been hiding in the deep, cool waters of the lakes through the summer.

A variety of artificial lures may be used to take largemouth bass in the larger lakes during autumn. The plastic worm is a favorite among bass anglers. Spinners, jigs, and crank baits are also productive during the fall months. The fisherman's best bet is to carry along a good selection of lures, and ask around at the dock or marina to see what types of lures have produced best.

The crappie -- a Central Virginia favorite -- also becomes easier to catch during the autumn. Like bass, the crappies move into shallower water when the temperatures begin to fall, and pursuing them becomes a real treat when fishing around brush piles and other structure with small minnows or jigs.

Crappies and striped bass -- the king of freshwater game fish in Virginia -- can be found in large schools in the big lakes during the Autumn months.

Farm ponds, watershed lakes, and other smaller impoundments also come alive with foraging fish as the shadows grow longer in fall.

Whatever an angler's preference -- smallmouth bass, stripers or blugills -- Autumn is a time of joy for freshwater fisherman in Virginia.

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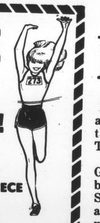

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adds. "But I still expect them to be competitive. They always are."

The coach believes that Gretna and Brookville will be tough teams in the Seminole District this year, as well. And Buckingham, whose junior varsity squad had an outstanding season in 1981, may prove to be a district darkhorse, according to Tolley.

Tolley feels that the Appomattox junior varsity program, under the tutelage of Coach Bob Hudson, will benefit her squad in years to come, as well.

"Coach Hudson is doing an excellent job with the junior varsity girls," Tolley notes. "I expect this to improve our program a great deal next year."

But for now, Tolley is concentrating on the current season.

"We're going to have to depend on our quickness and we're going to have to refine an aggressive, running-type defense," the coach notes.

"Our practices have been good since Aug. 10," she adds. Tolley, who was not happy with last year's change from a winter girls' basketball season to a fall season, feels that the short pre-season practice period and summer heat have had less effect on the team's preparation this year than last.

"It's still hot, but we haven't had to make as many adjustments this year," the coach says.

"How the players jell as a team will determine our success this season," Tolley concludes.

"And if we can stay healthy and avoid foul trouble, I think we may see some good results early in the season."

Raiderette Schedule

APPOMATTOX GIRLS' BASKETBALL

Date	Opponent	Place
Aug. 31	Gretna	Away
Sept. 2	William Campbell	Away
Sept. 7	Jeferson Forest	Home
Sept. 14	Altavista	Home
Sept. 16	Brookville	Home
Sept. 21	Liberty	Home
Sept. 23	Buckingham	Home
Sept. 28	Rustburg	Away
Sept. 30	Gretna	Home
Oct. 5	William Campbell	Home
Oct. 7	Jefferson Forest	Away
Oct. 12	Nelson	Home
Oct. 14	Altavista	Away
Oct. 19	Brookville	Away
Oct. 21	Liberty	Away
Oct. 26	Buckingham	Away
Oct. 28	Rustburg	Home

Varsity games start at 8 p.m.
Jayvee games start at 6:30 p.m.

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